

2011 Noble Marine Streaker National Championships at Pennine S.C.

The Streaker class attracted an entry of 48 boats from 30 different clubs to their National Championships, sponsored by Noble Marine, held over the weekend of June 25th-26th at Pennine Sailing Club in Yorkshire. It promised to be a particularly competitive affair with last year's champion, Tom Gillard, keen to defend his title from the challenges of past champions Steve Cockerill and Ian Jones, and so it proved. Tom had spent the week competing (and just failing to win by the narrowest margin) the Fireball Worlds in Ireland and while most Streaker sailors were arriving in relaxed mood at Pennine on Friday afternoon, he was just coming off the water and rushing to the airport to get back to England in time for the Streaker event.

On Saturday the conditions were challenging to say the least, with a strong and gusty south-westerly wind driving rain clouds across Winscar Reservoir. In the first race the favourites (Steve, Tom and Ian) were soon at the front of the fleet but Tom's chances of overall success were dealt a severe blow when his forestay fitting broke and he had to retire, leaving Steve to take the win with Ian second. Race 2 saw Tom back in action but again it was Steve who finished first, with Tom second. This meant that the pressure was on Tom and he duly responded with a win in race 3, but Steve's second place meant that, with just Sunday's two races to go, Steve was well on course for overall victory.

The forecast for Sunday was for sunshine and lighter winds. However, as people climbed bleary-eyed from their tents there was general consternation at the sight of clouds racing overhead and white horses on the water. Fortunately the wind had moderated somewhat by start time and race 4 got underway.



To stand any chance of winning the championship Tom had to win both races of the day and he was leading the fleet at the end of the first lap. Unfortunately for him the race was then abandoned as the race officer realised that many boats had been obstructed in rounding a mark by a motorboat that was moored too close to it. Tension mounted. There was the first and only general recall as the restart was attempted, but eventually race 4 was underway again. Dave Smith and Matt Jenkins led to the first mark but Steve was soon hot on their tails. Tom was having to fight back from further down the fleet but made huge gains on each leg of the course and at the finish of what seemed a marathon race, had pulled into 2nd place, but Steve was always ahead of him .

This meant that the title was Steve's but he sailed the last race and again came out on top, so winning the series with 4 firsts and discarding a second. Tom finished second overall while Ian Jones, who had consistently finished in the top 3, took third, and Tom's father Alan (another past champion) was fourth.

The racing had been close and competitive throughout the fleet. One of the people to watch for in the future is Loughborough University student Amy Robinson; despite being a relative newcomer to the class she finished 12th overall and her 7th place in race 1 was particularly impressive given the difficult conditions. Ruairidh Campbell from Scotland was awarded the prize for the most improved results; last year he was 35th with a best result of 27th, while this time he had three results in the teens and finished 19th. The prize for the first boat over 15 years old went to Matthew Whitfield in 1446, and both he and his dad Ian had a good championship finishing 14th and 16th respectively, both significant improvements on last year.

A few boats used the 'Wave' sail on Saturday which, being much smaller in area, gave a greater chance of getting round the course without capsizing. This was the first time many Streaker sailors had seen this sail option in use; while not being competitive against the full rig, it did allow some people to have fun when otherwise they would have been doing too much swimming or staying ashore.

This was the fourth time in ten years that the class has chosen Pennine S.C. to host its Nationals and the club did not disappoint; the ladies in the galley were terrific (lots of hot food was the order of the day on Saturday) and the rescue boat teams also did an excellent job. Fortunately the clouds cleared on Sunday and we could see what a beautiful place it is when the sun shines!

The class is also extremely grateful to its sponsors, namely Noble Marine, Pinnell & Bax, Sail Register and Rooster Sailing.

Results (top 10)

| Pos. | Sail no. | Name | Club | Race 1 | Race 2 | Race 3 | Race 4 | Race 5 | Total points | Nett points |
|------|----------|-----------------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1767 | Steve Cockerill | Hill Head SC | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 2 | 1761 | Tom Gillard | Sheffield Viking | DNF 46 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 53 | 7 |
| 3 | 1759 | Ian Jones | Dovestone SC | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 11 |
| 4 | 1691 | Alan Gillard | Sheffield Viking | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | DNF 46 | 61 | 15 |
| 5 | 1650 | Matt Jenkins | Sheffield Viking | 5 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 29 | 21 |
| 6 | 1541 | Nick Lovell | Ouse Amateur | 6 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 35 | 25 |
| 7 | 1703 | Ian Lees | Scamonden | 4 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 42 | 28 |
| 8 | 1619 | Ian Bradley | Ouse Amateur | 8 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 37 | 28 |
| 9 | 1654 | Veronica Falat | Waveney & Oulton Broad | 13 | DNF 46 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 81 | 35 |
| 10 | 1657 | Mike Palfreman | Stokes Bay SC | 11 | 7 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 46 | 35 |

1st helm under 20

1st helm over 45

1st helm over 55 and 1st lady

1st helm over 65

1st helm over 75

Most improved

1st boat over 15 years

Team prize

Amy Robinson (12th)

Alan Gillard (4th)

Veronica Falat (9th)

Dave Smith (11th)

David Hinks (38th)

Ruairidh Campbell (19th)

Matthew Whitfield (14th)

Sheffield Viking S.C.

Blakeney S.C.

Hill Head S.C.

Waveney & Oulton Broad Y.C.

Welton S.C.

Yeadon S.C.

Clyde Cruising Club

Tamworth S.C.

Report by Veronica Falat